

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 03545 171414Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02 TRSE-00 BIB-01 /055 W  
-----171426Z 081103 /47

O R 171340Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5199  
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3545

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT PFOR UR US  
SUBJECT: SOVIET DISSIDENT PRESS CONFERENCE: STATEMENTS CONCERNING  
U.S. ADMINISTRATION

SUMMARY: AS ADDRESSEES ARE NO DOUBT AWARE FROM PRESS  
REPORTS, HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND MEMBERS OF SOVIET  
JEWISH "REFUSENIK" COMMUNITY HELD JOINT PRESS CON-  
FERENCE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16. THIS CABLE DEALS WITH  
STATEMENTS BY SAKHAROV CONCERNING THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION.  
SEPTEL FOLLOW ON OTHER ASPECTS OF THE GATHERING.  
END SUMMARY.

1. THE CENTERPIECE OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS A STATE-  
MENT WRITTEN BY SAKHAROV ABOUT THE MARCH 4 IZVESTIA  
"EXPOSE" AND THE SUBSEQUENT ARREST OF SHCHARANSKIY.  
THE STATEMENT WAS READ BY SAKHAROV'S WIFE; SAKHAROV  
WAS PRESENT EVEN THOUGH HE WAS ILL WITH A BAD COLD.  
WHILE WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN FULL TEXT, WE  
UNDERSTAND SAKHAROV'S STATEMENT CHARACTERIZED THE  
IZVESTIYA ARTICLES AND ARREST OF SHCHARANSKIY AS  
"BLACKMAIL" AGAINST THE U.S. ON THE EVE OF THE  
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 03545 171414Z

VANCE VISIT, IN THE SENSE THAT SOVIET OFFICIALS  
WERE COUNTING UPON USG CONCERN OVER THE SUCCESS  
OF THE VISIT TO PREVENT THE ADMINISTRATION FROM  
SPEAKING OUT ABOUT SHCHARANSKIY'S ARREST. THE  
SOVIETS THUS HOPED TO FORCE THE U.S. TO SURRENDER  
ITS POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SOVIET UNION,  
AND ALSO HOPED TO STRENGTHEN THEIR ABILITY TO

ACT "UNLAWFULLY" AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS  
IN THE USSR.

2. DURING A CONFUSED AND DISJOINTED QUESTION AND  
ANSWER PERIOD FOLLOWING THE READING OF THE STATE-  
MENT, SAKHAROV REPORTEDLY SAID AT VARIOUS TIMES;  
--THE CURRENT, CRITICAL SITUATION OF THE SOVIET  
HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT WOULD BE GREATLY ASSISTED  
IF WORLD OPINION, THE U.S. CONGRESS AND THE PRES-  
IDENT WOULD REACT TO SHCHARANSKIY'S ARREST;  
--ANY RELAXATION OF PRESSURE FROM ABROAD ON  
THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE WOULD BE HIGHLY UNFOR-  
TUNATE AT THIS "CRITICAL MOMENT;"  
--SOVIET STATEMENTS ALLEGING THAT USG CONCERN  
OVER HUMAN RIGHTS AMOUNTS TO INTERFERENCE IN SOVIET  
INTERNAL AFFAIRS WERE "PURE BLACKMAIL;"  
--PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION  
HAVE NOT CAUSED FURTHER ARRESTS IN THE USSR;  
--THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY WAS A LONG-RANGE ONE,  
BUT ANY HESITATION NOW WILL HAVE "A TRAGIC  
EFFECT."

3. IN RESPONSE TO A DIRECT QUESTION ABOUT WHAT  
SAKHAROV FELT PRESIDENT CARTER SHOULD DO, SAKHAROV  
REPORTEDLY SAID HE WAS ADDRESSING HIS REMARKS  
NOT ONLY TO THE PRESIDENT BUT TO WESTERN EUROPEAN  
LEADERS AS WELL, DID NOT FEEL IT APPROPRIATE TO  
OFFER ADVICE TO THE PRESIDENT, BUT WOULD BE HAPPY  
IF PRESIDENT CARTER CHOSE TO SPEAK OUT AT THIS  
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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 03545 171414Z

TIME.

4. WE UNDERSTAND SAKHAROV WAS LATER ASKED IF HE  
INTENDED TO MEET WITH SECRETARY VANCE DURING THE  
LATTER'S VISIT HERE. SAKHAROV REPORTEDLY REPLIED  
THAT HE DID NOT WANT SUCH A MEETING IF IT WOULD  
BE AWKWARD FOR THE SECRETARY. SAKHAROV ADDED  
THAT HE WAS OF COURSE ALWAYS READY TO MEET WITH  
ANY FOREIGNERS WHO MIGHT FIND IT USEFUL TO TALK  
WITH HIM ON HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT HE DID NOT INTEND TO  
REQUEST A MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY.  
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## Message Attributes

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